

Spartacist League Statement

Kaiser Hospital Strike: One Out, All Out!

Taking their cues from Trump's attacks on unions and Medicaid, the hospital bosses, from NY to CA, want to crush us. The strike by 31,000 UNAC/UHCP members at Kaiser is entering its third week. The Kaiser bosses are hoping to starve you out while they keep operations up and running. Healthcare workers holding the line and winning would be a boost for other workers facing the same attacks.

But the current strategy of the union leadership, based on allowing the hospitals to run business as usual, will not solve the key issues striking workers are fighting for: higher wages, more staffing and better patient care. We saw this same strategy play out in the 2024-25 Kaiser mental health workers strike in Southern California. Exhausted and isolated after 196 days and with their co-workers routinely crossing their picket lines, the mental health workers were forced to settle for a contract that gave them up to 50 percent lower wages than comparable colleagues on the medical side, stuck them with an inferior pension and provided them fewer guaranteed patient hours than Kaiser therapists in Northern California. The leaders refused to mobilize the full strength of their unions for fear that a united strike of all Kaiser workers could upset their relations with the bosses and politicians.

The Kaiser workers must win this one! To do this, we need a strategy that refuses to accept the bosses' terms, mobilizing the whole workforce in united action:

- **One out, all out! Picket lines mean don't cross!** Kaiser pharmacy workers in Southern California UFCW locals are planning to strike on February 9. This is an important development, but what is really needed is to pull **everyone** out to beat Kaiser. If the union leaders are unwilling to build picket lines that no one crosses, union militants should take the lead and reach out to all the other Kaiser unions to honor the UNAC/UHCP lines.

- **Union control of patient care!** Non-essential patient care must be shut down, but essential care should continue under control of the striking healthcare workers, not management and scabs. This would undercut the lie pushed by the bosses that they defend patients.

- **Bolster the picket lines! Demand that union leaders mobilize the community!** The Kaiser workforce is drawn heavily from the oppressed communities. Raza, black, Asian and immigrant working people built cities like L.A. and Oakland from the ground up and face the same spiraling healthcare costs and attacks on their living standards as the healthcare workers. A winning strike can be a jumping-off point for labor to take the lead in defending immigrants and oppressed communities from ICE and fighting for quality healthcare for all.

- **We can only rely on our own strength! No to capitalist politicians!** Union leaders lobbying Democrats for better working conditions and patient care is a dead end. What have the workers and oppressed gotten from giving millions to these capitalist politicians? Nothing but unaffordable housing, decrepit healthcare, miserable working conditions and decaying schools. Remember that it was the Democrats who recently rescued Trump by allowing him to ax health insurance subsidies.

- **Demand the no-strike clause be ripped out of the contract!** Kaiser workers in other unions do not have to act like there's no other choice but to accept the no-strike clause their leaders agreed to. Pressure from the bottom can force the leaders to honor the picket lines and make the no-strike clause a dead letter. UNAC/UHCP can set an example for all the Kaiser unions by fighting to remove the no-strike clause from their next contract, putting all the workers in a better position to take on the healthcare behemoth.

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